

Submitter: Cate Casad  
On Behalf Of: Casad Family Farms  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

I urge you to renew the state's investment in climate resilient agriculture by funding HB2979, the Food Systems Resilience bill. HB 2979 provides funding for Oregon's Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants as well as similar funding for Food Hubs and Farmers Markets.

The Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants are supporting Oregon's small and underserved producers to be more resilient to fire and extreme weather events – funding things like trailers for evacuation, drought resilient seeds, and more infrastructure to increase our resilience to the extremes we are facing. This funding is a great alternative to traditional disaster relief funding, as it has given farmers the resources to maintain their crops and livestock through disasters, rather than being compensated by the State after they lose them. This is a strategic and responsible use of state funding.

We were recipients of this grant funding in 2024 and it allowed us to re-establish more drought resilient grasses on crop land that has lost irrigation waters and was struggling due to the grasses previously planted being water hungry and irrigation dependent. These types of large perennial plantings are very expensive and take year to establish and see income from, so it would have been impossible to do without the funding. This project now gives us a jump start on being more resilient in the face of increasing water loss, increasing heat waves, and threat of wildfire. Our holistic grazing operation will now be able to expand rather than contract. This means we will be feeding more families and stewarding more land in a region where farms are contracting. We must be PROACTIVE, and not rely on the wack-a-mole approach to disaster remediation. These grants give farms the funding to get more proactive for future resilience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cate Casad  
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